

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SOFIA 01119 01 OF 02 031306Z

47

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SOFIA 1119

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EGEN, SCUL, BU, OVIP (POPOV, IVAN)

SUBJECT: POPOV VISIT: THE QUESTION OF BILATERAL AGREEMENTS

REF: SOFIA 1100

1. IN REFTTEL WE PROMISED TO SET OUT PROS AND CONS, AS THEY ARE SEEN FROM OUR VANTAGE POINT, OF USING THE POPOV VISIT TO CONCLUDE AN OMNIBUS AGREEMENT ON SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL AND CULTURAL EXCHANGES AND/OR AN AGREEMENT ON AGRICULTURAL COOPERATION. THE LEAST IMPORTANT ASPECT OF THIS QUESTION IS THAT THE BULGARIANS WANT SUCH AGREEMENTS (ALTHOUGH NEGOTIATING AGREEMENTS WHEN THEY FEEL THEMSELVES UNDER TIME PRESSURE AND BADLY WANT TO HAVE THEM SQUARED AWAY FOR POPOV TO SIGN IN WASHINGTON WOULD GIVE US SOME TACTICAL ADVANTAGE). THE BASIC QUESTION IS WHETHER NEGOTIATING AND CONCLUDING SUCH AGREEMENTS AT THIS TIME IS IN THE US INTEREST.

2. TO PUT THE CONS FIRST, NEGOTIATING THESE AGREEMENTS WOULD SEEM TO GIVE US A GREAT DEAL OF WORK FOR LITTLE PRACTICAL EFFECT; IF THE BULGARIANS WANT TO COOPERATE

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PAGE 02 SOFIA 01119 01 OF 02 031306Z

THEY CAN DO SO WITHOUT THE NEED FOR FORMAL AGREEMENTS;

THERE IS NO TRUE RECIPROCITY INVOLVED IN THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL FIELDS BECAUSE BULGARIA HAS VASTLY LESS TO OFFER US THAN WE CAN OFFER IT. BESIDES, WHY BE NICE TO THE MOST FAITHFUL OF THE SOVIET SATELLITES? SHOULD WE NOT PUT SOME DISTANCE BETWEEN THE WAY WE TREAT BULGARIA AND SOME OF THE LESS BENIGHTED AND HIDE-BOUND OF THE EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES? WHAT HAS BULGARIA DONE FOR US LATELY (OR EVER)?

3. THE CASE FOR INITIATING NEGOTIATIONS PROMPTLY RESTS ON FOUR PROPOSITIONS: (A) IT IS NOT OUR POLICY TO WEAN BULGARIA AWAY FROM THE SOVIETS. HOWEVER IT IS IN OUR INTEREST TO DEVELOP NORMAL RELATIONS; (B) MONEY; THERE ARE SUBSTANTIAL BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES IN BULGARIA, AND IT IS IN OUR INTEREST TO CREATE A CLIMATE IN WHICH THESE WILL PROSPER; (C) THE STATUS QUO FAVORS THE BULGARIANS, AS WILL BE SHOWN BELOW, TO A QUITE SUBSTANTIAL EXTENT; AND (D) CONVERSELY, CONCLUSION OF AN OMNIBUS AGREEMENT ON EXCHANGES WILL GIVE US A BETTER OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE OUR INFLUENCE FELT IN BULGARIA THAN WE WOULD HAVE IF WE DID NOT CONCLUDE THE AGREEMENTS AT THIS TIME. FINALLY (E) THERE ARE CERTAIN ISSUES IN OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS WHOSE SETTLEMENT WOULD BE FACILITATED IF WE ARE ABLE TO HOLD OUT PROSPECT OF CONCLUDING AGREEMENTS DESIRED BY THE GOB.

4. THE FIRST ARGUMENT IS SO BROADLY PHILOSOPHICAL THAT WE ARE RELUCTANT TO GO INTO IT IN DETAIL SINCE WE DO NOT SEE THE ENTIRE SOCIALIST BLOC PICTURE CLEARLY ENOUGH FROM SOFIA. IT SEEMS TO US, HOWEVER, THAT IN THE CURRENT STATUS OF DETENTE WITH THE SOVIET UNION, TREATING BULGARIA AS AN APPENDAGE OF THAT COUNTRY ALMOST DICTATES THAT WE SHOULD EXTEND TO IT ANALOGOUS TREATMENT. STILL, BULGARIA IS MUCH MORE THAN AN APPENDAGE OF THE SOVIET UNION. DUE TO THE FAVORED TREATMENT IT RECEIVES FROM THE USSR IT IS ABLE TO MAKE ECONOMIC PLANS ON AN AMBITIOUS SCALE, AND COOPERATION WITH THE US IS BEGINNING TO FIGURE IN THEM IN THE SAME WAY THAT COOPERATION WITH US HAS BECOME IMPORTANT TO THE USSR. WHILE WE ARE NOT TRYING TO WEAN BULGARIA AWAY

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 SOFIA 01119 01 OF 02 031306Z

FROM THE SOVIETS, ANY OPPORTUNITY WE MAY HAVE TO INFLUENCE EVENTS HERE WILL MORE LIKELY BE FURTHERED IF WE DEVELOP OUR RELATIONS IN A MANNER WHICH SHOWS THAT WE ARE INTERESTED IN COOPERATING WITH THEM. WE BELIEVE IT IS IN OUR INTEREST TO OPEN OPTIONS FOR BULGARIA AND THERE IS SOME EVIDENCE THEY ARE SEEKING THIS.

5. THE MAIN ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF AN OMNIBUS AGREEMENT

IS THAT IT FITS IN WITH OUR POLICY OF PROMOTING AMERICAN EXPORTS AND OTHER BUSINESS ARRANGEMENTS FAVORABLE TO OUR BALANCE OF PAYMENTS, FOR WHICH THERE ARE SUBSTANTIAL OPPORTUNITIES HERE. THE WESTERN EUROPEANS AND JAPANESE ARE IN THIS RESPECT MILES AHEAD OF US, HAVING LONG SINCE RECOGNIZED THAT THE BULGARIAN WAY OF BUSINESS REQUIRES THE NEGOTIATING AND SIGNING OF BORING AND REDUNDANT AND OFTEN TOTALLY ANODYNE AND LARGELY NON-SUBSTANTIVE PIECES OF PAPER. AS WE EXPLAINED IN EARLIER MESSAGES, THE GREATEST IMPORTANCE OF THE POPOV VISIT IS THAT IT SENDS A SIGNAL DOWN THROUGH THE BUREAUCRACY, FROM A MEMBER OF THE POLITBURO, THAT THE GOVERNMENT APPROVES INTENSIFIED ECONOMIC COOPERATION WITH THE US. THIS APPLIES EQUALLY TO THE CONCLUSION OF THE PROPOSED AGREEMENTS.

6. WE NOW COME TO WHAT WE MIGHT CALL THE BULGARIAN PARADOX. ACTUALLY, WHILE IT IS THE BULGARS WHO ARE PRESSING FOR CONCLUSION OF AN AGREEMENT ON EXCHANGES, THE STATUS QUO BENEFITS THEM MORE THAN IT DOES US BECAUSE IN THE TECHNICAL AND SCIENTIFIC FIELDS THEY ALREADY HAVE ACCESS, ON A COMMERCIAL BASIS, TO VIRTUALLY ALL THE AMERICAN KNOW-HOW THAT THEY NEED BECAUSE THEY ACQUIRE IT CURRENTLY BY PURCHASE OR LICENSING AGREEMENTS. ON THE OTHER HAND, ON THE CULTURAL/INFORMATION SIDE, BULGARIA IS ALREADY ABLE TO TELL ITS STORY IN THE US TO A CONSIDERABLE EXTENT WHEREAS THE US, DUE TO THE LACK OF A CULTURAL EXCHANGE AGREEMENT, IS LARGELY HAMSTRUNG IN ITS EFFORTS TO REACH BULGARIAN AUDIENCES. WHILE THIS ASPECT SHOULD NOT BE EXAGGERATED, BECAUSE BULGARIA IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE WILL CERTAINLY CONTINUE TO LIMIT US ACCESS ESPECIALLY TO ITS INTELLIGENTSIA, THE CURRENT SITUATION IS INDEED PARADOXICAL:
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PAGE 04 SOFIA 01119 01 OF 02 031306Z

THE BULGARIANS PROCLAIM THE NEED FOR "RECIPROCITY" BUT THEY SEEM TO HAVE NO TROUBLE GETTING BULGARIAN PERFORMING ARTISTS BOOKED IN THE US ON COMMERCIAL TERMS (THE DIMITROV QUARTET FOR A SECOND TIME, THE BULGARIAN ARMY CHORUS, BULGARIAN FILM WEEK IN SAN FRANCISCO, THE PIRIN DANCE ENSEMBLE, ETC.) WHILE WE HAVE A POOR RECORD HERE, DESPITE HERCULEAN EFFORTS OF OUR PAO, BECAUSE OF BULGARIAN OBSTRUCTION IN THE ABSENCE OF AN AGREEMENT.

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PAGE 01 SOFIA 01119 02 OF 02 031314Z

47

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8249

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SOFIA 1119

7. THE BULGARIANS ARE NOT EAGER FOR A CULTURAL COOPERATION AGREEMENT BECAUSE THEY UNDERSTAND ITS POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE, BUT THEY ARE WILLING TO EXTEND THE TECHNICAL-SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION AGREEMENT TO COVER THE CULTURAL ASPECT ALSO. IF, AS WE HOPE, AUTHORITY WILL BE GRANTED TO NEGOTIATE SUCH AN OMNIBUS AGREEMENT ON EXCHANGES, WE SHOULD OF COURSE BEAR DOWN MOST HEAVILY ON THE CULTURAL SIDE. IN OTHER WORDS, WE HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLOIT THE BULGARIAN EAGERNESS FOR A TECHNICAL-SCIENTIFIC AGREEMENT TO OBTAIN WHAT WE NEED IN THE FIELD OF CULTURAL EXCHANGE.

8. FINALLY THERE IS THE ASPECT OF IMPROVING OUR RELATIONS IN OTHER RESPECTS. WHILE I INTEND AT AN APPROPRIATE TIME TO POINT OUT TO POPOV THAT REMOVAL OF THE ISSUES OF DIVIDED FAMILIES AND JAMMING OF THE VOA WOULD BE HELPFUL IN SETTING THE STAGE FOR HIS WASHINGTON DISCUSSIONS, OUR WILLINGNESS TO CONCLUDE AGREEMENTS DESIRED BY THE BULGARIANS WOULD SUBSTANTIALLY IMPROVE THE POSSIBILITY OF REMOVING ALSO THOSE IRRITANTS IN OUR RELATIONS. THE ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF THE POPOV VISIT ARE IMPORTANT, BUT WE CAN AND SHOULD

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PAGE 02 SOFIA 01119 02 OF 02 031314Z

USE IT AS AN OCCASION FOR ACROSS-THE-BOARD IMPROVEMENT
IN THE DIRECTION OF GENERAL NORMALIZATION.

9. THERE ARE A FEW NON-ISSUES THAT SHOULD BE ADDRESSED
BRIEFLY JUST TO MAKE SURE ALL WASHINGTON AGENCIES ARE
AWARE OF THE SITUATION: (A) IT SHOULD NOT BE THOUGHT
THAT IN THE SCIENTIFIC FIELD WE WOULD BE GIVING THE
BULGARIANS SOMETHING SIGNIFICANT THAT THEY DON'T
ALREADY HAVE. THE EXISTING AGREEMENT BETWEEN OUR NATIONAL
ACADEMY OF SCIENCE AND THE BULGARIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCE
ALREADY PROVIDES SUBSTANTIALLY WHAT THE BULGARIANS
WANTED, AND ANY NEW AGREEMENT NEED NOT IN OUR JUDGMENT
GO MUCH FURTHER THAN THAT; (B) THE PRESENT BULGARIAN
DRAFTS ARE CLEARLY INADEQUATE. THEY KNOW THIS, AND THEY
KNOW THAT WE KNOW IT. THEY ARE WAITING FOR OUR
COUNTER-DRAFTS. THE POOR QUALITY OF THE INITIAL
BULGARIAN DRAFTS, WHICH WERE PREPARED UNDER TIME
PRESSURE JUST AFTER THE DENT VISIT, ARE THUS NO
ARGUMENT AGAINST NEGOTIATIONS; (C) SINCE POPOV
HIMSELF HAS SAID CONCLUSION OF THESE AGREEMENTS IS
NOT A CONDITION OF HIS COMING TO THE US, WHY NEGOTIATE
NOW? AS INDICATED ABOVE, WHILE THE BULGARIAN
EAGERNESS FOR AGREEMENTS IS A TACTICAL ADVANTAGE, THE
CASE FOR CONCLUDING AN OMNIBUS AGREEMENT ON EXCHANGES
IS BASED ON OUR NATIONAL INTEREST IN DEVELOPING RELA-
TIONS WITH BULGARIA.

10. IT WILL BE APPARENT FROM THE ABOVE THAT AN AGRI-
CULTURAL COOPERATION AGREEMENT SEEMS TO US OF MUCH LESS
INTEREST THAN THE ONE ON EXCHANGES. FOR COSMETIC
PURPOSES, SOME SUCH AGREEMENT COULD PROBABLY BE NEGOTIATED
MORE EXPEDITIOUSLY, AND WE SEE NO REASON FROM
OUR VANTAGE POINT WHY NEGOTIATIONS ON THIS COULD NOT
ALSO BE INITIATED NOW; BUT WE WOULD GIVE THE AGRICUL-
TURAL AGREEMENT DISTINCTLY LOWER PRIORITY IF THERE IS ANY
CHANCE OF OBTAINING AUTHORIZATION TO NEGOTIATE THE EX-
CHANGES AGREEMENT.

11. IN LIGHT OF THE ABOVE, WE REQUEST AUTHORIZATION
AND INSTRUCTIONS, ON THE BASIS OF A COUNTER-DRAFT TO
THE BULGARIAN DRAFT AGREEMENT ON SCIENTIFIC-TECHNICAL
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PAGE 03 SOFIA 01119 02 OF 02 031314Z

COOPERATION, TO INITIATE NEGOTIATIONS DURING JULY SO
THAT AN OMNIBUS AGREEMENT ON TECHNICAL, SCIENTIFIC
AND CULTURAL COOPERATION CAN BE SIGNED DURING THE
POPOV VISIT TO WASHINGTON.
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